PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF MALE VIETNAM VETERANS BASED ON THEIR FAMILY STABILITY, EMPLOYMENT STABILITY, AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans based on their family stability, employment stability, and educational attainment. It attempts to determine if there is a significant relationship between the dependent variable, psychosocial adjustment, and the three independent variables, family stability, employment stability and educational attainment. A convenience sampling of 30 male Vietnam veterans was conducted in studying the relationship.

The major findings in the study conclude that there is a significant relationship between psychosocial adjustment and family stability and psychosocial adjustment and educational attainment. The study, however, finds no significant relationship between psychosocial adjustment and employment stability.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the Vietnam War took place from August 5, 1964 to May 7, 1975. The Vietnam War was unique in many respects. For instance, it was the longest conflict in which this country has ever been engaged, yet war was never officially declared.[1] Many of the persons involved in the war served a twelve-month tour of duty as opposed to the duration of the war. Of the 1.6 million Americans who were engaged in the war, over 57,000 were killed, 300,000 were wounded, and 1,000 remain missing.[2] It has been suggested that as many as 800,000 veterans suffer psychological and interpersonal problems associated with their combat experiences. For example, Vietnam era veterans are 65 percent more likely to die from suicide and 49 percent more likely to die from motor vehicle accidents than non-veterans from the same era and age group.[3] The mortality rate among members of this population is 17 percent higher than other veterans. In essence, from these statistics one can begin to see the impact of the Vietnam War on the participants.

Statement of the Problem

For some Vietnam veterans, the Vietnam era was marked by disillusionment, confusion and a fear of being killed. This was indeed a struggle for survival. "Of the veterans that entered the

military service, all have undergone an interruption in their normal lives, leaving jobs or schools to enter the military service."[4] It is important to realize that "our forces in Vietnam were in part a teen-age army made up of soldiers eight years younger on the average than those who fought in WW II."[5] The average age of the Vietnam veteran was 23 years old. Researchers describe the military service of these young people as the "disruption . . . of the orderly passage to adulthood: first complete school, then get a job, and finally marriage."[6] These persons have had to make several abrupt transitions in their lives, from civilian life to a military war environment and then back to civilian life again. In addition, the Vietnam veterans received an unpleasant homecoming as opposed to WW II veterans who received ticker tape parades, people cheering, and a crowd proud to see the returning soldiers. The Vietnam veterans did not receive such a warm welcome. Instead, there were anti-war demonstrations and people throughout the crowd jeered and yelled "baby killer." The Vietnam veteran was "treated with apathy and rejection by a society that was itself torn apart by the war."[7] It was quite evident the climate in America was not conducive to helping one to successfully adjust to civilian life.

This transition has been more difficult for some than others. For example, Figley and McCubbin observed that,

> based on 75 years of research on combat veterans and the process of integration into society, several major sources of stress have been identified: psychological residue of war, changes at home during the soldier's absence, changes in the family structure, pressures on the veteran to return to 'normal,' employment difficulties, and medical problems.[8]

However, statistics report that only 20% (1,400,000) of the returning Vietnam veterans are known to be having difficulties readjusting as opposed to the 80% (5,600,000) who are functional in society.[9] In Egendorf's study conducted in 1986, he found that

> the overwhelming majority of the men in the sample led basically stable lives. They had learned how to provide the structure and discipline to establish coherent routines in their work and personal relationships . . . they represent the capacity to make and keep commitments.[10]

The purpose of this study is to assess the level of psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans based on their family stability, employment stability, and educational attainment. The researcher will be analyzing the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their family stability?

2. What is the relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their employment stability?

3. What is the relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their educational attainment?

Statement of Hypotheses

The researcher proposes to investigate three hypotheses. The hypotheses are as follows:

1. There is no significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their family stability.

2. There is no significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their employment stability.

3. There is no significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their educational attainment.

Operational Definitions

1. Family stability - reliable and continuous support system where individual members fulfill assigned roles and obligations.

2. Employment stability - the ability to maintain an occupation for the duration of one year or more.

3. Educational attainment - the level to which an individual completes systematic learning by instruction.

4. Psychosocial adjustment - complex process which includes the processing and integration of veterans' pre-Vietnam and post-Vietnam experiences as shaped by their emotional and behavioral characteristics.

5. Vietnam War - an opened armed conflict between the United States and Vietnam that occured from August 5, 1964 to May 7, 1975.

6. Veteran - one who has a long record of service in a given activity or capacity; one who has been a member of the armed forces.

7. Vietnam veteran - one who served a tour-of-duty or more in Vietnam, or served at main duty stations elsewhere during the Vietnam War.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychosocial Adjustment

Psychosocial adjustment is "a complex process which includes the processing and integration of veterans' pre-Vietnam and post-Vietnam experiences as shaped by their emotional and behavioral characteristics."[1] In researching the psychosocial adjustment of Vietnam veterans the researcher notes the character of the veterans prior to service and after discharge from service. Vietnam veterans were the youngest soldiers ever sent into combat by the United States. In terms of the veterans' psychological development, their identities were not yet crystallized. They were still in a period of "psychosocial moratorium," a period where there is a delay in the development of the self; one is coming into accepting adult roles and responsibilities. During this time, the veterans experiencing late adolescence/early adulthood generally experiment with roles and identities, and the boundaries of family and society are tested.

> The adolescent searches for a new sense of continuity and sameness that synthesizes all that he has experienced along with his endowments and the opportunities for realizing them. Acquiring ego identity involves the integration of past identifications with others into a whole that represents one's unique self.[2]

Families and society usually help to maintain the adolescents until their true psychological identities are formed.

However, Vietnam veterans were uprooted from those accepted forms of passage into adulthood and "thrust into a controversial conflict which produced profound changes . . . ."[3] The military became the veterans' family members, and in that family he was required to perform duties which went against all that he had learned in his previous life. Sometimes he committed atrocities which he had never before imagined. The new identity that emerged in basic training was that of a warrior: "Once incorporated into the warrior identity, the individual perceived himself to be a true representation of his country's ideology."[4] However, John P. Wilson, Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychology, Cleveland State University, stated that psychological conflicts accompanied this newly formed identity. The veterans' perception of himself as a competent, well-trained warrior changed due to a number of unresolvable dilemmas. Wilson reports:

> First, the soldier repeatedly found himself in existentially absurd situations. For example, there was repetitive capture and loss of territory to the enemy.
>
> Second, the failure of the civilian and military forces of South Vietnamese to make a positive commitment to victory raised serious questions as to the overall purpose of the war.
>
> Third, there was strong sentiment that the military leadership of American troops was not always adequate for the guerrilla nature of the war. On many occasions, poor decisions were made which either endangered or cost the lives of the squad or company.
>
> Fourth, there were problems of black market operations, political corruption in Saigon, and differential and inequitable military assignments which generated resentment, apathy, and hostility.
>
> Fifth, the men were keenly aware that a tour of duty was only thirteen months. Thus, the goal was survival before commitment to a just cause . . . .

> Sixth, there was difficulty in discerning the enemy. Except for those situations where fire lines were established, the guerrilla warfare made it difficult to recognize the enemy. Moreover, the problem of knowing the enemy was made more confusing since women, children and older people sometimes were the cohorts of the communists.
>
> Seventh, the seemingly meaningless death of friends generated profound existential questioning of personal identity and purpose, 'Why did they die and not me?' was the question for which there was no simple answer.[5]

Due to these complications precipitated by the war, the problem of role confusion often developed in the Vietnam veterans. "The warrior's role was now a confused one bordered on all sides by conflicting values, beliefs, opinions and experiences that made conventional political and moral values inadequate in the face of these psychological, moral and political conflicts."[6] van der Kolk revealed that men who developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were more likely to have been adolescents during their combat experiences. He also found that they had often formed intense attachments to another man in the unit, but suffered the death of that comrade. The loss was often followed by a period of intense rage and acts of revenge. van der Kolk explains, "Adolescents use their peer group as an intermediary stage between dependency on their family and emotional maturity, and the army minimizes the impact of peer group cohesion."[7] The veterans who experienced the death of a friend also were dealing with the injury to and/or the dissolution of the narcissistic self. One veteran vividly described his feelings:

> Most of all, we learned about death at an age when it is common to think about oneself as immortal. Everyone loses that illusion eventually, but in civilian life it is in installments over the years. We lost it all at once and, in the span of months, passed from boyhood

> through manhood to a premature middle age. The knowledge of death severed us from our youth as irrevocably as a surgeon's scissors had once severed us from the womb. And yet, few of us were past the age of 25. We left Vietnam peculiar creatures, with shoulders that bore rather old heads.[8]

In the words of John P. Wilson, "For these men the battle of Vietnam continues in their minds; for the battle of identity integration is also the struggle for individual dignity and integrity, for without it the veteran faces despair as a forgotten warrior."[9] Overall, it seems that for many veterans the legitimacy of the war is an issue that they may never fully resolve and thus it may impair their readjustment into the mainstream of society.

Family Stability

Family stability may be defined in terms of a reliable, continuous support system where individual members fulfill certain basic needs of life. It is a place where food, clothing, and shelter should be provided along with emotional companionship, economic cooperation and protection, sexual relations, legitimate procreation, socializing of offspring and social control, to name a few.[10] According to Brende and Parson,

> The essential tenet of a family system is that the family tends naturally toward psychological equilibrium, and that as long as this family's homeostasis is achieved and maintained, family members will experience well-being and emotional security. Conversely, when the equilibrium is lost, the system attempts to regain its stability by accommodating the disruptive element. When the latter cannot be overcome, familial well-being gives way to breakdown of the family system.[11]

One must realize that the Vietnam veteran is making a difficult transition back into his family and it is expected that the veteran,

as well as his family, will experience some degree of stress. Family stress is defined as "a state which arises from an actual or perceived imbalance between demand, e.g., challenge, threat, and capability, e.g., resources, coping in the family's functioning. It is characterized by a nonspecific demand for adjustment or adaptive behavior."[12] During this period it is important that the family members be willing to compromise and negotiate to facilitate the transition process.

As the family system attempts to make the necessary adjustments, the family progresses through several phases. According to a study done by Borus in 1973, there are three distinct time periods. The first phase is marked by the homecoming of the returnees; the plane trip from Vietnam. It was noted that approximately half of the veterans surprised their family by dropping in without any prior notice. The rationale for this "dropping-in phenomenon" was described as "serving a number of coping purposes in addition to the fact that surprise is a socially acceptable way to make interpersonal contact."[13] Many Vietnam veterans used this approach to deny they had been separated from their family and friends for an entire year or more and would now be entering a changed family system and environment.[14] After surviving through such an experience, many realized that they too had changed. The Vietnam veteran sought to somewhat control the anxiety and uncertainty of seeing his family again along with decreasing the possibility of being unpleasantly surprised by negative reactions from family members. Moreover, for approximately one year the veteran had learned to conceal his emotions

and he did not wish to become emotional at seeing his family. Thus, it seems that the "dropping-in phenomenon" was a way that the returnee could attempt to harness the time, place and circumstances of the initial emotional rendezvous with his family.[15] The element of surprise was used as his defensive mechanism.

The second phase of family readjustment occurred during the 30-day leave. During this time the returnee was gradually readjusting to a dynamic family situation. He and the family worked to reintegrate their lifestyles. When the veteran returned he was confronted with a wide variety of family dilemmas. For instance, some were informed for the first time that a family member was now deceased. Others encountered dissolution of marriages.[16] However, research studies show that the most difficult task the Vietnam veteran encountered was re-establishing his role as a functioning member of the family:

> The returnee entered a restructured family system that had learned to face problems and live without his input, and on his return they had to make a major readjustment to reinclude him. He had to face, for the first time, hostility from relatives who were previously unable . . . to express their feelings of anger to him for abandoning them for a year.[17]

This is just one of many descriptions of the experiences the Vietnam veterans faced upon their return. Some veterans commented that their fantasies about their homecoming made it even more difficult to cope for they had trouble separating fantasy from reality.

The third chronological space of family readjustment issues was marked by the period after the veteran returned to active duty. In this stage the veteran and his family continued to work through the readjustment phases, but here a complicating factor is included.

The veteran could only see his family on weekends. Thus the veteran was faced with a part-time status in the family. At this time several veterans reported that this placed "conflicting demands for his time and affiliation between home and the service."[18] These demands from family and the military service often left the veteran feeling more stressful than when he had been totally deprived of contact with his family during the Vietnam War.

As families of Vietnam veterans progressed through these stages it was important that the family members would be as open and honest as possible. Members had to realize that the veteran had been in a war environment for an extended period of time and he may show signs of psychic numbing, exhibiting little or no emotions. This often impedes the communication between family members, thus creating dysfunctional communication patterns. The communication patterns may have been dysfunctional before the veteran entered the war, but in some instances the condition may have worsened. The Vietnam veteran who is unable to communicate and openly express his emotions to his family may also be impairing the basic prerequisite to familial tranquility: trust.[19] A study by Scruggs, Berman and Hoage states that the war significantly impacted the veteran in terms of his ability to trust others. Researchers have reported that "combat veterans were found to have significantly less trust in people than noncombat veterans."[20] It was surmised that this characteristic of lack of trust often adversely affects interpersonal relationships. To add to this confusion, there is the revelation that the Vietnam veteran's ability to trust may take on an ambiguous character. They

may fear losing a member(s) of the family and this tends to keep him dependent and close to the family members, while at the same time he is fearful of intimacy. Some members are too close, others too distant.[21] This paradox of being "too close or too distant" revolves primarily around the spouses.

Moreover, there have been several studies conducted concerning the Vietnam veteran and his family relations. Some studies reveal that the war had a traumatic effect on the veteran, regardless of his family background. For example, Brende and Parson found that veterans reared with a solid family background may still experience stress reactions and disorders upon return from the war.[22] In this case, they stated the outcome was due to the amount of combat experienced. Heavy combat, "a relatively high frequency of engaging the enemy and being exposed to dead bodies, being wounded, etc., was noted as a key stressor."[23] Thus the veteran experiencing heavy combat was most likely unable to fulfill his obligations to the family. This in turn often created marital and financial problems.

Furthermore, marital problems reflect family stability due to the fact that what affects the spousal relationship also impacts the other family members. Marital stability is defined as "the average number of times separated, average number of times divorced, and percentage ever divorced."[24] One of 20 of the marriages begun before the husband went to Vietnam was dissolved by divorce in the first year out of Vietnam; approximately five percent. Moreover, 12 percent of the veterans got divorced in the service.[25] Harrington and Jay report that "Vietnam veterans divorce at twice the rate of their

peer group and the incidence of wife and child abuse are high."[26] It seems that the strain of separation, in addition to the re-entry adjustment problems were often too much for the marriages to withstand. However, the results of a study refute this statement. Vietnam-era veterans were compared to non-Vietnam era veterans based on marital status. Contrary to popular belief that Vietnam veterans have more marital problems than other veterans, it was found that "the divorce rate of Vietnam veterans was apparently no higher than that of the other group."[27] Moreover, there is also interesting evidence that suggests that marriages which survived after the first year of re-entry were at least as stable as those of other veterans. From this information one may deduce that the war merely accelerated the break up of marriages that would have dissolved even in the absence of service in the war.

There seems to be a consensus in the literature that the "existence of an external social support system, e.g., wife and children, active involvement in church, contributes to the well functioning of the family and decreases the incidence of emotional distress."[28] The support system provides a sense of community or belonging for the individual and may or may not be mutually exclusive. In that the American public did not provide the recovery environment that is necessary for the proper readjustment of the Vietnam veteran, another support system must be used as an alternate:

> In order to facilitate veterans' transition to a civilian identity, the social context at home needed to provide a similar environment in which veterans could continue to justify their combat behaviors while accepting a new set of values for civilian or peacetime behavior.

> If the social context at home did not condone the behaviors, then the veteran could not safely engage in self-examination.[29]

Martin and Card found that Vietnam veterans returning from the war with intact support systems have an advantage over those who are lacking in this area. They focused on the advantage of married men over widowed, unmarried and divorced Vietnam veterans in this context: "Being married is also consistently related to a higher sense of psychological well being."[30] Martin points out that the level of combat experienced by the veteran may have affected the marital relationship. He poses the question as to "whether being married helps reduce the deleterious effects on psychological functioning due to combat exposure?"[31] The results of the study revealed that men who were married and experienced the stressors of heavy and light combat showed less stress reaction than those not married. Thus it seems that, "the deleterious effects of combat exposure are greatly reduced if a man has a spouse."[32] Martin also refers to marital status as a social support indicator which makes allowances for more interpersonal relations. However, one must note that not all marriages are conducive to positive interpersonal ties. And, indeed it cannot be said that persons never married are denied opportunity to have intimate support. Martin suggests that "it is not being married per se which gives men an advantage . . . over married men."[33] But, it is the support the spouse gives her husband as he makes the transition from a war environment back to society.

In another study by Boulanger, she focused on the "relationship between family instability and the development of stress

reactions via ascertaining how different levels of family stability interact with the various duties of the Vietnam era veteran" and noted that the greater the level of family instability, the higher the percentage of men who developed post-war stress reactions.[34] Furthermore, "among low combat Vietnam veterans, there is a large increase in the amount of stress reactions experienced by men from average families and those from least stable families."[35] Men from most stable families are least likely to experience traumatic stress reactions. However, Boulanger, in concurrence with Brende and Parson, found that more Vietnam veterans from stable families who experienced heavy combat also developed stress reactions more than men from less stable families. Suffice to say, the predisposition of these veterans had no significant impact on the development of stress reactions in the post-war period. Regardless of one's family stability, when these soldiers were confronted with heavy combat stressors of war, their behavior was, to some degree, affected; everyone has a certain breaking point. Furthermore, the study reveals that in the immediate post-war period the level of stress experienced by veterans from low to unstable families was not significantly different according to the levels of combat in which they were involved. Men from least stable families seem to experience stress from just having served in Vietnam. One may speculate that these persons may have had stress reaction symptoms even if not exposed to combat.[36] In reporting the results of the study, one must note that the author was careful to acknowledge the possibility of over inclusiveness of persons in the least stable families and

under inclusiveness of men in the most stable families, thus, effecting the reliability of the findings. However, it was concluded that one's environment and one's level of family stability prior to enrollment in the military affected some veterans.[37]

On the other hand, many research studies seem to be in agreement that the veteran's relationship to his family may have been partially determined by social, educational, or vocational factors that impacted the family. The Vietnam veteran's military experience may have only aggravated the situation. According to LTC Worthington, "high-adjustment scores exist between post-service marriage and professional occupational status, while a relationship also exists between (low) adjustment scores and marital problems . . . being high school drop-outs and being unemployed."[38] The data suggest that maladaptive behavioral patterns may have developed prior to the veterans' enrollment in the service.

Employment

Employment stability may be defined as "the ability to maintain an occupation for a duration of one year or more."[39] It is another important indicator of the level of adjustment the Vietnam veteran has obtained. At the time when the Vietnam era veteran returned to society the nation was incurring its highest unemployment rates. Vietnam veterans were faced with a number of transitions, as mentioned earlier, and obtaining work in the job market was another key component in the veterans' readjustment. Moreover, it is important to note that the "work achievement of veterans will heavily depend upon the

circumstances of the labor market at the time they enter it, and whenever they seek to change their work status."[40] In 1970 as thousands of Vietnam veterans left the service, they returned to a nation where a bleak economy made it very difficult to find employment. The young, generally unskilled veterans were prime targets for the economic squeeze. Despite the fact that the veterans were entitled by law to the jobs they held to prior to service, many men returned to find that they were no longer employed at those jobs due to numerous layoffs. Cooper Holt, former Assistant Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars stated his concern: "Young men returning from Vietnam say they can't get jobs of any kind. Asked about experience, they say they have been riflemen. And who needs riflemen?"[41]

Research studies display the employment pattern of the veterans which reveals the veterans' employment stability. In the first three years following the release from the military, some Vietnam veterans displayed an erratic pattern of changes in occupational level with a mean downward movement in the second year. This is an unusual pattern for labor market entrants. A significant determinant of employment stability is the number of jobs frequented by the veterans and the duration of their employment. Records show that among the veterans who are presently unemployed but who have had jobs since discharge from the war, approximately 60 percent have held more than one job. More veterans were unable to maintain employment over long periods of time due to physical and/or psychological repercussions of the war. This is just one of the many reports which supports the idea that

"Vietnam veterans were less stable than nonveterans with respect to staying with a job for an appreciable amount of time."[42] Although they held numerous jobs before and/or after military service, they did not seem to hold the job for approximately one year or more. The primary questions researchers address concern "whether the interruptions caused by military service are only temporary setbacks from which veterans eventually recover . . . or whether these interruptions result in more permanent occupational deficits."[43] In order to investigate this issue, one must acknowledge the Vietnam veterans' preservice employment, effect of military occupational training (if any) on obtaining post-war employment, and educational attainment. The latter issue will be formally addressed in the section entitled "Educational Attainment."

First of all, one must look at the Vietnam veterans' preservice employment. Malcolm Lovell, the former Assistant Secretary of Labor, testified before the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Affairs concerning the Vietnam veterans' preservice employment status. He reported that an "estimate of at least 350,000 or one-third of the 1970 separatees from military service were employed before entering the military service."[44] However, any preservice work experience they had was most likely in either unskilled or semi-skilled occupations due to their youth and relative lack of education. Unfortunately, veterans with limited preservice experience and formal education were not generally offered marketable skills or education while in the military. Some veterans reported that they did not receive any occupational training in the service. For

example, "a survey by Louis Harris conducted in August, 1971 found that 44 percent of the returning veterans stated that they received no military training while in the military; of those who served between six months and two years, the figure rose to 58 percent."[45]

Second, one must note the impact of military service in the Vietnam War on post-war employment. Some researchers state that the branch of the military in which the veteran served is a factor which impacts post-war employment opportunities. Levitan and Cleary note that seven-tenths of the Navy and Air Force Vietnam veterans responded that they had acquired skilled training, while less than half of the Army and Marine veterans felt they had been taught a skill.[46] Over one-third of the men separated from service during 1970 were in combat-related or service specialties. These men were unable to transfer their military experiences to civilian jobs.[47] In addition, the study by Louis Harris supplements previous findings: "over half of the veterans who did receive occupational training felt it was only slightly or not at all useful."[48]

On the other hand, the veterans reported that the technical skills acquired in the Air Force were transferable to civilian life. A study conducted by Paul Weinstein supports this contention. He stated that "most service jobs are transferable to civilian life."[49] Moreover, the study also revealed that the public, Vietnam era veterans and employers agreed on this subject. The margin of concurrence was 80 percent for the employers and the public, and 60 percent for the veterans, with only 37 percent of the veterans disagreeing that "occupational skills learned in armed forces do make

veterans more qualified than before they entered into service."[50] From the preceding information, one may deduce that some veterans had deficiencies in working skills. Although some studies report that some veterans did not show a lack of salable skills, most authors seem to agree that the occupational crossover from the military proved to be minimal.

For those who lacked the necessary skills for employment, this made their adjustment even more difficult in the midst of an unstable economy. Card, in his Project Talent study, noticed that from 1964 to 1965, the percentage of unemployed Vietnam veterans decreased to approximately one percent; but from 1964 to 1967 the percentage increased to almost three percent, and between 1967 and 1971, unemployment increased from four percent to approximately nine percent. However, Michelotti and Gover reported that in 1972 the unemployment rate decreased for veterans 20-29 years of age. It fell from 9.1 percent to 8.0 percent. Thus the gap between unemployment rate of veterans and nonveterans became more narrow between mid-1971 and 1972. But these researchers point out that these statistics reflected a shift in the age composition of the veterans versus the nonveterans. They noted: "Very little of the increase in the 20-29 year old veteran population and labor force was in ages 20-24, where unemployment problems were more severe than for older veterans."[51] Overall, Strayer and Ellenhorn report that 200,000 Vietnam veterans were unemployed in 1975. To complicate the issue, research studies report that the "duration of unemployment among Vietnam veterans and nonveterans continued to increase in the second

quarter of 1971."[52] At this time, approximately 30 percent of the unemployed had been searching for jobs 15 weeks or more compared to 17 percent one year prior to this. Thus it seems that the bleak economic climate compounded the veterans' problems.

Michelotti and Gover state several reasons for the many unemployment problems of the Vietnam veterans. For example, "some persons became unemployed by losing their jobs or quitting a job."[53] Although veterans and nonveterans were equally likely to be laid off from work, the fact that more veterans than nonveterans were new entrants into the job market who had never worked before placed the veterans at a disadvantage because they were not used to the intricacies of the labor force.

According to Card, high unemployment rates among the Vietnam veterans may be attributed to the veteran's lack of technical skills. He proposed that this was due to two main factors: (1) combat stress and its after effects and (2) function of the different homecoming given by the country; the anti-war sentiment.[54] He tested these propositions and found the former statement to be invalid and unjustifiable, and the latter statement to be valid and reliable. The intensity of the political climate seemed to have a great impact. Although the reasons for this are unclear, the outcome does suggest that Vietnam veterans may have been victims of discrimination in the marketplace. And, the anti-war sentiments may have been so pervasive that the veterans felt alienated and thus psychologically and physically withdrew from seeking employment.

On the other hand, Parent and Magaziner maintain that the high unemployment rate for Vietnam veterans is the result of different factors. Most veterans were entering the civilian labor force at the time when jobs were not only hard to find, but the market was also very competitive. Also, Vietnam veterans were more likely to receive unemployment insurance payments regardless of their prior work experience, thus, there was no immediate rush to accept any job. On the other hand, the nonveteran may have not been eligible for unemployment insurance, thus he was more apt to accept anything in the market.

As researchers continue to question why the unemployment rate is so high they consider "whether the veterans consider it a waste of time looking for a job because there just are not any around," and "whether many employers are interested in you (Vietnam veterans) until they find out that you have just returned from the service?"[55] Seventy-one percent of the veterans questioned in this study rejected the idea that implied it was a waste of time to look for a job because none was available. Sixty-five percent answered the second question affirmatively. These findings may lead one to believe that most veterans did not feel it was useless to search for a job in spite of the rather dismal economic situation. Moreover, the members of the Senate Committee reported factors which they found give the veteran the most problems in searching for a job. The public's point of view is compared to the employer's point of view:[56]

Public's Point of View

Unemployment	(37%)
Adjusting to Civilian Life	(20%)
Lack of Skills and Qualifications	(20%)
Emotional Lack of Maturity	(15%)
General State of Economy	(11%)

Employer's Point of View

Unemployment	(29%)
Adjustment to Civilian Life	(23%)
Lack of Skills and Qualification	(20%)
General State of Economy	(20%)
Emotional Lack of Maturity	(10%)

According to the public, veterans have difficulty finding jobs mainly due to the lack of jobs; consequently, this causes high unemployment rates. The employer's standpoint is very similar. Unemployment is once again cited as the key problematic area for veterans. From the veteran's point of view, of the total population sampled in this study, 61 percent felt that "there aren't enough jobs around, and 21 percent state that there aren't enough jobs which satisfy me (the veteran), are desirable, and pay well."[57] The majority of veterans polled here seemed to support the opinion of the public and employers.

In determining the impact of military service on the psycho-social adjustment of the veteran in terms of employment stability, the researcher studied the general attitudes toward hiring veterans. In a Congressional study, the public, returning Vietnam era veterans and prospective employers were asked to assess how interested employers generally are in hiring returning veterans. The results revealed that among the American public 58 percent think employers show some degree of interest in hiring returning veterans, 66 percent

of the veteran population show that they are very interested in hiring fellow veterans, and 57 percent of employers said they were very interested in hiring veterans.[58]

Another question in this study probes to find out the likelihood of prospective employers hiring a veteran over another young man who had not served in the armed forces. The results revealed that a slim majority of the public (51 percent) and prospective employers (53 percent) say they are more likely to hire veterans other than nonservice connected men. This was reported by persons 50 years and older. However, a majority (61 percent) of younger prospective employers reported that they do not treat veterans differently from other job applicants. In this study reported by the Congressional Senate, it is also stated that most employers felt that they did not have an obligation to hire Vietnam veterans, but they were willing to hire anyone with the proper qualifications.

Often the Vietnam veteran was viewed as more mature than the nonveteran of the same age due to the discipline required in the army. Donald J. Byrne, Vice-President of the Bankers Trust Company in New York City, stated that "their years of service have given them a maturing process . . . . All of them have had some experience which can be either directly or indirectly related to the jobs in which we place them."[59] He went on to say that "people tend to look at disabilities and to overlook abilities . . . . At Bankers Trust we've . . . discovered a valuable company asset in disabled employees."[60]

For those veterans who are able to obtain jobs, it is interesting to note the nature of jobs held by the veterans. Michelotti

and Gover found that in "the second quarter of 1972 about one-fourth of the veterans aged 20-29 were craftsmen (such as skilled construction workers and mechanics) compared to one-fifth of the nonveterans in the same age range."[61] Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce noted that "craft positions . . . are likely to be the most desirable blue collar positions . . . . They pay more, and generally involve better working conditions than other blue collar jobs."[62] "Moreover, a smaller portion of veterans than nonveterans were in professional and technical jobs (11 percent and 17 percent, respectively)."[63]

The Project Talent study conducted by Card states that "in 1974 . . . Vietnam veterans were in jobs in business administration, technical jobs, and in jobs involving mechanics and industrial trades."[64] These findings support the results of previously mentioned studies that stated that those who did receive adequate military occupational training were more apt to transfer their technical skills to civilian employment.

In order to alleviate some of the unemployment problems facing the Vietnam veterans, the federal government has established several programs to help the Vietnam veteran make the transition back into the labor force. Some of the programs and benefits are: the GI Bill administered by the Veterans Administration; Project Transition under the Department of Defense and Employment Services: Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemen; and Re-Employment Rights; all under the Department of Labor.[65] Since this time many of these problems have expanded and others have been added.

Project Transition is an example of one of the programs established by the government to aid the veterans in their transition back into civilian life. Project Transition began in 1968. It was primarily for "those servicemen most in need of vocational training and education for civilian life . . . ."[66] This program significantly contributed to helping veterans get job counseling, training and placement. Approximately 1.5 million servicemen had received some type of job counseling for civilian jobs under Project Transition by the end of June, 1972.[67] Since this time the program has incorporated several other special programs. For example, Military Experience Directed Into Health Careers (MEDIHC) is "a joint program of the Department of Defense and Health Education and Welfare in which servicemen who received military training in the health or medical field are assisted in obtaining jobs in the civilian health fields."[68] There is also the Veterans Construction Jobs Clearinghouse, a companion program to MEDIHC which aided servicemen, who were trained as construction mechanics.

Education

Education is another important indicator of the level of psychosocial adjustment of the Vietnam veteran. Robert Richards commented that "formal education was clearly a significant element in the transferability process."[69] In Featherman and Hauser's study, they found that during the Vietnam era, higher education developed a stronger relationship to occupational achievement.[70] Senator Alan Cranston agrees with this statement. He believes that perhaps getting

the veteran back into society means first getting him back into school. The Senator once commented: "The American Association of Junior Colleges says that at least half of our young veterans need further education or training if they are to compete in the job market."[71] In the words of Jonathan Steinberger, it is rather clear that "education and training for veterans is particularly important now that hundreds of thousands of veterans are returning to a tight job market."[72]

In determining the relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of the Vietnam veteran and educational attainment, one must first clearly define educational attainment. Educational attainment may be measured by "the total number of years of school completed."[73] In presenting the educational profile of the Vietnam era veteran, the following factors should be considered: the character of the veteran as a student, pre-military educational attainment, post-military educational attainment and the extent to which the veterans utilize educational benefits.

The authors, Loring and Anderson, depict the veteran student as follows:

1. The veteran who enters college is very highly motivated.
2. The veteran often feels anxiety about his age.
3. The veteran wants to be respected for the experience he has had and the learning he has derived.
4. Many veterans have a low self-concept regarding academic matters.

5. There is considerable diversity in the verbal and literary fluency of these veterans.

6. Veterans have ambivalent reactions to the authority of teachers and the structure of courses.

7. The veteran is more accustomed to external discipline than self-discipline.

8. Veterans lack career plans.

9. Many veterans express a dissatisfaction with the American system.

10. The transition from military to civilian life is a period of considerable readjustment for most veterans.[74]

In reviewing these characteristics, the authors describe the average veteran as one who yearns to learn, but experiences anxiety in doing so. He seems unsure of the environment in which he will have to function and uncertain about his ability to achieve his goal. This attitude may be due to the fact that the veteran had been away from civilian society for a long period of time and now that he has returned he sees how much his society has changed. He and his friends have grown older, but their experiences may be considerably different. He has been exposed to a war-like environment, as opposed to an environment where one is taught how to read, write and speak fluently, and how to perform systematic problem solving. He may feel that he is academically very far behind his peers and therefore, questions his ability to fulfill the course requirements. Moreover, many veterans distrust authoritarian figures, such as the teacher in the classroom. His feelings about the treatment received as a soldier in the army by authoritarian figures may be negative and the veteran may project this

negative image onto the teacher. This is just a brief scenario of some of the many attitudes and feelings veterans encounter as they contemplate furthering their education.

One of the most pronounced problems Vietnam veterans face upon discharge is that they have poor educational backgrounds. It is well documented that this is a major barrier for the veteran.[75] The most important pre-military characteristic in explaining post-military differences is education at the ages of entrance into service. "The primary effects of other social background variables on current educational and occupational attainment is through their impact on early educational attainment."[76] The root of this problem seems to lie in the fact that some of the veterans entered the war as opposed to completing their high school education. It is frequently documented that on the average, Vietnam veterans had very little education prior to service. Many of the Vietnam veterans had only completed high school. In a study by Michelotti and Gover, of all the servicemen discharged from August, 1964 through the end of 1971, the median years of schooling was 12.5 years. Moreover, one must note that "the higher the pre-military educational attainment, the greater the likelihood of resuming educational careers."[77] A study referred to by Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce revealed the following information:

> Eighty-one percent of the Vietnam veterans returned to post-military education of those who had previous college training. Fifty-nine percent of the Vietnam veterans with pre-military vocational training returned to post-military educational careers. Fifty-seven percent of the Vietnam veteran high school dropouts returned to post-military careers.[78]

In this study, over half of the persons in each category who received a high level of education prior to service were most likely to seek post-service education.

Furthermore, post-military educational attainment is another important factor to observe. A study in which 1,400 Vietnam veterans, Vietnam-era veterans (defined in this study as those who did not serve in Vietnam, but in main stations elsewhere) and non-veterans were surveyed concerning their educational attainment. The following observations were made:

> Whereas 76 percent of the non-veterans continued to post-secondary education, only 72 percent of the Vietnam-era veterans and 59 percent of the Vietnam veterans did so. Furthermore, 46 percent of the non-veterans had graduated from college, whereas for the Vietnam veterans and Vietnam-era veterans, only 27 percent and 22 percent, respectively, graduated from college.[79]

From these statistics, one may infer that although non-veterans are more likely to continue toward post-secondary education than Vietnam-era veterans and Vietnam veterans, Vietnam veterans did seek post-secondary education, but to a lesser degree.

There are several reasons many veterans did not continue their post-war educational careers. Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce cite two major factors. First of all, there were temporal disruptions. The veterans' educational careers were interrupted by the military service. This often resulted in the out of ordinary sequencing and timing of life developmental tasks. Although some "non-veterans break their educational careers by traveling, working or hanging around for some period before beginning their secondary education, such breaks do not generally equal the time the veterans spent in the military."[80]

Moreover, "some veterans did not return to civilian life until the mid-nineteen seventies, therefore, they had high school and college degrees to complete before considering post-college degrees."[81] Therefore, this interruption could mean that when one did decide to return to the educational arena, he would be quite older, possibly far behind his non-veteran peers, and may have family responsibilities. Therefore, some veterans did not find it worthwhile to pursue post-college education. Moreover, the "economic rewards accompanying higher education were diminishing, and this led to the deflated return on investment in higher education."[82] The record shows the impact of the weak economy on school attendance and patterns of educational attainment by the veterans.

The second reason that Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce cite is that many veterans returned with low levels of education. On the one hand, those that served were likely to be either those who were not performing well academically or those who had directed less energy into their educational experience.[83] On the other hand, it is noted that military service served as an aid to the poor who desired a well rounded education, but lacked the financial resources. For these persons, this meant "free" education would be provided by the government in their post-war years.

Due to the low levels of education evidenced by many of the returning Vietnam-era veterans, the government established several educational programs to aid the veteran in his transition back into society. There was a concern that "the war had drawn so many young people away from education that there would be a serious deficit in

many professional and technical fields."[84] It was believed that the GI Bill might ease these prospective shortages. The GI Bill of Rights was created as a means to aid veterans in education and training, home, farm and business loans; unemployment compensation; job placement assistance; and mustering out pay. The educational benefits were a significant part of these funds. The GI Bill made allowances for scholarship funds and grants to individual students.

Since the re-enactment of the GI Bill of Rights in 1966, "over two and one-half million Vietnam-era veterans, out of a total of approximately seven million . . . made use of their benefits in some fashion."[85] To make the GI Bill more attractive, in 1970 a 35 percent boost in basic benefit levels and a number of highly innovative provisions were added to encourage educationally disadvantaged veterans to enter the groves of academe. There are other programs which have been incorporated into the GI Bill which compliment its provisions. For example, there is the Predischarge Program (PREP) for educationally deficient active duty servicemen with more than six months service; Tutorial Assistance Program (TAP); National Educational Task Force and the Vietnam Era veteran (NTFE); and a number of amendments were made to the bill to help breach the financial barrier to participation in the benefits.

However, researchers report that the Vietnam veterans have been slow in utilizing their educational benefits. Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce observed the following:

> In the first thirty-six months of the most recent GI Bill, 20.9 percent of eligible Vietnam era veterans participated. For the first thirty-six months of the World War II and Korean GI Bills, the participation rates

> were 25.9 percent and 26.5 percent, respectively. Later statistics continued to show the same pattern. As of April 1972, seventy-one months after the current GI Bill began, only 37.3 percent of Vietnam era veterans had taken advantage of their benefits. The participation rate after seventy-one months of the World War II bill was 44.9 percent; for the Korean bill, 39.8 percent.[86]

There are researchers who question why some veterans have been slow to use the benefits for which they are eligible. Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce discuss the possibility of the veterans being unaware of their benefits. But, in their study their findings did not support this contention:

> Ninety-four percent . . . were aware of the availability of college, while 92 percent knew of benefits applying to vocational or technical school training. Eighty percent or three-fourths were aware of educational loans and high school completion. Seventy-seven percent were aware of correspondence training. Seventy percent were aware of apprenticeship training. Fifty-one percent were aware of work study programs.[87]

Thus it appears that the lack of awareness is not the most important factor that is responsible for the low number of Vietnam veterans participating in the educational opportunities provided by the government. Others contend that it is the lack of motivation on the part of the veterans.

Theoretical Framework

In the review of literature it is apparent that there are several theories that comprise the conceptual framework of this research. The key theories are: General Systems Theory, Social Systems Theory, Family Systems Theory and Stress Theory (in terms of military experience). It seems that these theories help to account

for some of the variation in the dependent variable of this study, psychosocial adjustment.

The general systems theory describes reality by depicting the structures and processes internal to a system, and by understanding the structure and processes that link one system to another. Talcott Parson, the major proponent of this theory, focused on changes in relationships between parts of the system and the whole system. Its main characteristics include open and/or closed boundaries, the maintenance of equilibrium or disequilibrium, and feedback that enters into the system. These components reveal the integration between the parts of the system and the system as a whole.

Furthermore, the social support system "involves the flow of information between people of emotional concern (empathy and caring), instrumental aid (acts such as giving of money or assistance), information aid (suggestions and advice), and appraisal (feedback or social comparison)."[88] The support system works to lead one to believe that he/she is cared for and loved. Moreover, Cobb states that "support systems give one emotional support, esteem support and it frames the individual in a network where everyone has common knowledge about goods and services available in the network."[89] Researchers concur that the social support system is an important factor in the readjustment process of the veteran. The conception of social support was adopted because it helps one to understand the veteran's plight through his own perceptions, rather than by the view of others. Thus, social support most readily accommodates itself to studying the veteran in light of his own experiences because the element of the veteran's

perception is appropriately acknowledged.

In conjunction with the social support system, there is the family system. The family systems theory refers to the members of the family and how the systems and subsystems function within the family independently, yet interdependently. Family, in a therapeutic sense, includes "all those who are significantly related to the family, whether by blood, physical presence or social contact."[90] Within the family system there are several subsystems: spousal subsystem, parental subsystem, parent-child subsystem, and the sibling subsystem. This system focuses on the dynamics of communication patterns of the family as they undergo continuous change. It also notes the stresses of the family and how the members of the system process and respond to internal and environmental stimuli. In addition, the family systems theory identifies the behaviors and responses of other systems toward the family system. According to this theory, the behavior of one family member some way impacts the whole family system.

Furthermore, there are also stress theories referencing the military experiences that are used to explain the phenomena that occur within the data to be presented. In the American Heritage Dictionary, 8th ed., stress is defined as "an applied force or system of forces that tends to strain or deform a body; it is a mentally or emotionally disruptive or disquieting influence." In terms of a military environment, stress may place great demands on a person, thus producing physiological, psychological or social disturbances. There are various stress theories. On the one hand, Worthington, Kadushin and Boulanger advocate that the Vietnam veterans' adjustment experiences,

positive or negative, were in no way significantly influenced by their military stint. Worthington states that one must look at the individual's pre-service history. On the other hand, Parson, Egendorf, and Figley and McCubbin are theorists who state that a great deal of stress experienced in the post-service period was due to the military experience. In addition, there are also theorists such as Borus, Card, Brende and Parson, and Wilson that focus on the uniqueness of the war in terms of the homecoming the Vietnam veterans received. These are just a few of the military stress theories that are revealed in the literature review.

These theories viewed in conjunction with one another will help researchers better understand the variances among Vietnam veterans and their post-service psychosocial adjustment in terms of family stability, employment stability, and educational attainment.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Design

The research design employed is a correlational design. Correlational studies include "all those research projects in which an attempt is made to discover or clarify relationships through the use of correlational coefficients (which express in mathematical terms the degree of relationship between any two variables)."[1] The design reveals the extent to which the dependent variable is affected by the independent variable.

Sampling

The sample in this study is comprised of 30 male Vietnam veterans that received services from the VET CENTER located at 922 West Peachtree Street in Atlanta, Georgia. The VET CENTER is designed to provide the Vietnam veteran with an opportunity to receive professional services and referrals through non-traditional approaches. The goal of the VET CENTER is to identify Vietnam-era veterans residing in the Atlanta area through outreach into his/her community and to link them with all available resources (See Appendix B.) Permission to use the facility was granted by Mr. Del Perkins, Director of the VET CENTER, and Mr. Willie Chappell, Therapist at the VET CENTER.

The participants were selected by using convenience sampling. This involves taking whichever elements are readily available to the researcher.[2] This style of sampling was chosen due to the fact that it was nearly impossible to identify all persons of the Vietnam veteran population. Nonetheless, the researcher acknowledged the possible limitations of generalizability, for it tends to reduce the utility of findings based on the availability of samples. Moreover, this sampling style proved to be most economical.

As the Vietnam era veteran came into the VET CENTER, the staff informed the veteran of the survey and requested that he complete the questionnaire. The respondents were insured that the confidentiality of the veterans would be preserved and the results of the study would be made available to all participants. After the Vietnam veteran completed the questionnaire, it was returned to the VET CENTER staff. The data were collected between February 11, 1988 and March 8, 1988, then collectively returned to the researcher.

Instrumentation

The instruments used to collect the data were: Family Relations Index, Psychosocial Adjustment Index, and Demographic Variables Index by Hudson and Nehemkis, Macari, and Lettieri. The survey was then distributed to a group of 30 male Vietnam veterans at the VET CENTER. Mr. Del Perkins, Mr. Willie Chappell, and other staff members assisted in the distribution and collection of the questionnaire.

Statistical Analysis

The null hypothesis presented in this study may be stated:

> There will be no significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their family stability, employment stability and educational attainment.

The appropriate statistical test to be used is the correlational coefficient. The correlational coefficient is "an index of the relationship between two variables."[3] It indicates both the strength and the direction of a relationship. The level of measurement required for using the correlation coefficient is the interval or ratio scale. There is one important limitation to using this statistic that must be acknowledged. The correlation between variables does not necessarily mean causality. "Just because one variable is labeled independent and another dependent, and a relationship is found between them, does not prove that changes in one variable causes changes in another."[4] However, valid and reliable conclusions may be drawn.

Chi square, a statistic used to test the independence of two factors, and Cramer's V, a statistic used to determine the relationship between variables, will also be presented.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE FINDINGS

The nonparametic statistics used in this study are Chi square and Cramer's V in examining the significance between the dependent variable, psychosocial adjustment, and the independent variables, family stability, employment stability and educational attainment. The data were examined by using Tables 1, 2, and 3 showing the cross-tabulations between psychosocial adjustment and family stability, employment stability and educational attainment, respectively. Table 4 shows demographic information in terms of frequency and percent. By looking at this table, one can see that of the thirty participants, seven or 23.3 percent are between the ages of 36-38, 19 or 63.3 percent are between the ages of 39-41, three or 10.0 percent are between the ages of 42-44, and one or 3.3 percent is between the ages of 45-47. In terms of race, 20 or 66.7 percent are Caucasian and 10 or 33.3 percent are Black. There are two or 6.7 percent who have never been married, nine or 30.0 percent who are married for the first time, 14 or 46.7 percent who have remarried, two or 6.7 percent are separated, and three or 10.0 percent who are divorced.

The table also shows the educational attainment of the veterans before the war. Three or 10 percent of the respondents completed grade school or less, seven or 23.3 percent had some high school, 16 or 53.3

Table 1

Crosstabulation Showing Psychosocial Adjustment and Family Stability

Psychosocial Adjustment	Family Stability		
	Little Support	Some Support	Good Support
Not Adjusted	1	1	
Somewhat Adjusted		10	5
Well Adjusted		11	2

$x^2 = 15.93$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.003$, Cramer's V = 0.5

Table 2

Crosstabulation Showing Psychosocial Adjustment and Employment Stability

Psychosocial Adjustment	Employment Status		
	Employed Full-time	Unemployed	Employed Part-time
Not Adjusted	1		1
Somewhat Adjusted	11	3	1
Well Adjusted	9	1	3

$x^2 = 3.77$, df = 4, $p > .44$, Cramer's V = 0.3

Table 3

Crosstabulation Showing Psychosocial Adjustment and Educational Attainment

	Educational Attainment	
Psychosocial Adjustment	Low Education	Moderate Education
Not Adjusted	2	
Somewhat Adjusted	15	
Well Adjusted	9	4

$x^2 = 6.04$, df = 2, $p < .05$, Cramer's V = 0.45

Table 4

Demographic Information

	Value Label	Frequency	Percent (%)
AGE	36-38	7	23.3%
	39-41	19	63.3%
	42-44	3	10.0%
	45-47	1	3.3%
RACE	Caucasian	20	66.7%
	Black	10	33.3%
MARITAL STATUS	Never Married	2	6.7%
	First Married	9	30.0%
	Remarried	14	46.7%
	Separated	2	6.7%
	Divorced	3	10.0%
BRANCH OF MILITARY SERVICE	Marines	12	40.0%
	Army	18	60.0%
COMBAT EXPERIENCE	Heavy	25	83.3%
	Light	5	16.7%
FEELING ABOUT WAR UPON ENTRANCE	I was a strong supporter.	16	53.3%
	I supported it.	9	30.0%
	I did not really have an opinion.	4	13.3%
	I did not support it.	1	3.3%

Table 4--Continued

	Value Label	Frequency	Percent (%)
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BEFORE WAR	Completed grade school or less	3	10.0%
	Some high school	7	23.3%
	Completed high school	16	53.3%
	Some college	2	6.7%
	Some graduate school	1	3.3%
	Completed graduate school	1	3.3%
PRESENT EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	Completed grade school or less	3	10.0%
	Some high school	4	13.3%
	Completed high school	13	43.3%
	Some college	7	23.3%
	Completed college	1	3.3%
	Completed graduate school	2	6.7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Employed full-time	21	70.0%
	Employed part-time	4	13.3%
	Unemployed	5	16.7%
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	Managerial	3	10.0%
	Craftsman	7	23.3%
	Professional	1	3.3%
	Clerical	6	20.0%
	Unskilled Labor	8	26.7%
	Other	5	13.3%
DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR ONE YEAR OR MORE	Yes	22	73.3%
	No	3	10.0%
	No answer	5	16.7%

Table 4--Continued

	Value Label	Frequency	Percent (%)
REASON FOR UNEMPLOYMENT	Lacks schooling or training	1	3.3%
	Physical or mental disability	1	3.3%
	Not enough pay	3	10.0%
	No answer	25	83.3%
EMPLOYMENT PRIOR TO SERVICE	Yes	13	43.3%
	No	17	56.7%
EVER HELD A JOB OVER A YEAR	Yes	22	73.3%
	No	8	26.7%

percent completed high school, two or 6.7 percent had some college, one or 3.3 percent had some graduate school, and one or 3.3 percent completed graduate school. In terms of their present educational level, three or 10.0 percent completed high school or less, four or 13.3 percent had some high school, 13 or 43.3 percent completed high school, seven or 23.3 percent had some college, one or 3.3 percent completed college, and two or 6.7 percent completed graduate school.

According to Table 4 there are 21 or 70.0 percent veterans employed full-time, four or 13.3 percent are employed part-time, and five or 16.7 percent are unemployed. Those who are unemployed report the following reasons: one or 3.3 percent lacks schooling or training, one or 3.3 percent has a physical or mental disability, and three or 10.0 percent indicated that jobs do not pay enough.

Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviation of Family Relations.

Table 6 shows the mean and standard deviation of Psychosocial Adjustment.

The author wishes to make special note of the following information that emerges from this study.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their family stability.

To test this hypothesis, a crosstabulation was performed using the SPSSX batch system to determine the relationship between psychosocial adjustment and family stability. The results of the statistical analysis from the crosstabulation showed chi square, $x^2 = 15.93$; degrees of freedom, $df = 4$; and the level of significance, $p < 0.003$. Thus, we

Table 5

Family Relations

ITEM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
There is a lot of love in my family.	2.567	1.194
I really enjoy my family.	2.867	1.137
I can really depend on my family.	2.733	1.081
I really do not care to be around my family.	2.467	1.008
Members of my family argue too much.	2.867	1.074
There is no sense of closeness in my family.	2.833	1.177
My family is a real source of comfort.	2.633	1.098
I feel like a stranger in my family.	2.800	1.472
My family does not understand me.	3.100	1.296
I feel proud of my family.	3.100	1.296

Table 6

Psychosocial Adjustment

ITEM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Feeling unhappy, sad or depressed	1.967	.718
Feeling hopeless about the future	2.067	.740
Feeling nervous or tense	2.065	.574
Worrying too much about things	2.290	1.419
Suddenly scared for no reason	1.742	1.341
Feeling low energy or slowed down	2.258	1.264
Blaming yourself for things	1.867	.730
Feeling easily annoyed or irritated	1.774	.762
Feeling that people are unfriendly and dislike you	2.290	.783
Never feeling close to another	2.433	.774
Thoughts of ending your life	1.258	.514
Feeling no interest in things	2.419	1.057
Feeling inferior to others	1.767	.858
Feeling lonely even when you are with people	2.500	1.042

reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and the support they receive from their families which gives stability to the family. However, from the result of Cramer's V ($v = 0.5$), we can conclude that the nature of the relationship is not strong.

Table 1 deals directly with the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their family stability. The researcher rejected the null hypothesis because a significant relationship between these two variables was recognized. Researchers in the literature review also acknowledged family stability of Vietnam veterans. Brende and Parson state that whereas a family is able to achieve and maintain an equilibrium, its members will most likely experience well-being and emotional security, but when a schism develops in the family system and it is not abridged, then the members tend to suffer from psychological insecurity. As time passes and the problem continues, the members are less likely to develop to their fullest potential.[1] The family system serves as the instrument in one's life which gives on nurturance and guidance. In terms of one's psychosocial adjustment, it is important because it lays the foundation as to how one will develop emotionally and psychologically.

Demographic data in Table 4 further shows the significance of the family support system as it promotes family stability; Table 5 reveals the means and standard deviations. Table 4 reveals the present marital status of the male Vietnam veteran respondents. Fourteen or 46.7 percent have remarried since their service in the war; but, it is is interesting to note that only three or 10.0 percent have been divorced

without remarrying and nine or 30.0 percent remain in their first marriage. These findings concur with Card who approximated that one of twenty of the marriages begun before the husband went to Vietnam was dissolved by divorce soon after his return.[2] Although the data do not reveal when the divorces and remarriages occurred, it is clearly shown that the majority of these men have been divorced. Furthermore, one must also account for the 30 percent of this population which has only been married once and are presently in the same relationship. Here the social support systems theory is seen in action. It seems that the social support system was deemed important and helpful to these persons. This finding concurs with Martin's statement about the spousal support system. He believes that marriage per se does not give men an advantage over unmarried men, but whereas there is a strong and supportive spouse to help the Vietnam veteran readjust to civilian life, this is what makes a difference.[3] This concept may also account for the fact that 46.7 percent of these respondents who were once divorced have presently remarried. They, too, may have acknowledged the value of a stable and nurturing support system. Therefore, as autonomous social work practitioners work with Vietnam veterans, they should seek information about the client's awareness and use of social support systems. Whether it is a family unit, church organization or some other support group, it is important that the client have some form of involvement in a social support system.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their employment stability.

The results of the statistical analysis from the crosstabulation showed chi square, $x^2 = 3.77$; degrees of freedom, df = 4; and the level of significance, $p > .44$. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their employment stability, and reject the research hypothesis. In addition, the result of Cramer's V ($v = 0.3$) also leads us to conclude that there is no relationship between these variables.

In Table 2 the results of the research concerning psychosocial adjustment and employment stability are displayed. It is interesting to note that in the literature review the majority of the Vietnam veterans investigated were unemployed, e.g., Card, Parent and Magaziner. However, in this study over 50 percent of the veterans were employed full-time, regardless of their level of psychosocial adjustment; nine or 30.0 percent were well adjusted, 11 or 36.7 percent were somewhat adjusted, and one or 3.3 percent was not adjusted. From these figures, one can see that psychosocial adjustment did not significantly vary based on employment status. Even those veterans that were not well adjusted maintained employment. These findings differ from other studies possibly because the jobs held by the respondents did not require a great deal of skill, and they were not jobs involving a lot of competition. Therefore, veterans at high and low levels of psychosocial adjustment could fulfill their job responsibilities.

The research study shows that the types of jobs held by these veterans are not professional jobs. It is reported that eight or 26.7 percent of the respondents have unskilled employment; seven or 23.3

percent are craftsmen; six or twenty percent are clerical employees; three or 10.0 percent hold managerial positions; and only one or 3.3 percent holds a professional position. These studies conducted by Michelotti and Gover and Card support these findings. The aforementioned researchers found that Vietnam veterans often held positions requiring very few skills because they had few skills to offer. As mentioned earlier, many veterans believed that the few skills they acquired in service were not transferable to civilian employment.[4] Furthermore, this study reveals that only 13 or 43.3 percent of the Vietnam veterans held employment prior to service and the majority, 17 or 56.7 percent, did not have preservice experience. The young age at which the veteran entered the military service seems to account for the veterans' limited preservice employment and this created a barrier to future employment because of their lack of experience and skills.

Researchers suggest that the branch in which the veteran served was also a determining factor as to whether the veteran obtained post-war employment. Table 4 displays that there are 12 men or 40 percent who served in the Marines and 18 men or 60 percent who served in the Army. It was suggested that the veterans trained in the Army or Marines did not have the opportunity to acquire adequate skilled training, whereas Vietnam veterans in the Navy or Air Force received salable skills transferable to civilian employment. In this study, the respondents were either Marine or Army veterans, therefore, it is difficult for the researcher to draw a valid conclusion whether one branch of the military provided some soldiers with more training than another military branch.

The differences between this study and others could also be due to the period of time in which the studies were conducted, the demographic location and the methodology employed to investigate the issue. In addition, these findings must be analyzed in conjunction with the duration of employment. Here it is revealed that 22 or 73.3 percent of the respondents have been employed for one year of more. By definition, this indicates employment stability. Once again, these findings do not positively correlate with findings of other researchers, e.g., Card, Michelotti and Gover, Parent and Magaziner. Parent and Magaziner had found that Vietnam veterans often moved from one job to another, seldom staying for long periods of time. In this case, these findings reveal a more positive outlook of the Vietnam veterans. Not only are they employed full-time, but they are maintaining jobs for a year or more. These favorable findings may be due to the existence of a better economy compared to the state of the economy when the veterans returned, or perhaps, Vietnam veterans may be utilizing their veteran employment benefits. Although some studies state that the Vietnam veteran was not using his benefits, e.g., Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce, in this study it seems that some veterans may be using the programs established by the federal government to obtain employment.

As for those persons who reported that they were unemployed, several reasons were given: three or 10.0 percent stated that jobs did not pay enough, one of 3.3 percent responded that a physical or mental disability barred him from working, and one or 3.3 percent responded that he lacked the necessary schooling or training, and thus did not qualify for certain jobs. However, one must note that

these statistics represent only a minority (16.6 percent) of the population studied.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their educational attainment.

The results of the statistical analysis showed chi square, $x^2 = 6.04$; degrees of freedom, df = 2; and the level of significance, $p < 0.05$. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans and their educational attainment. However, from the result of Cramer's V ($v = 0.45$), we can conclude that the nature of the relationship is not strong.

From Table 3 showing psychosocial adjustment and educational attainment, it is evident that the Vietnam veterans, four or 13.3 percent, who are well adjusted, achieved a moderate level of education; whereas, 15 or 50.0 percent of the somewhat adjusted veterans achieved a low level of education. Nine or 30 percent of the well adjusted veterans achieved a low level of education and two or 6.7 percent of the non adjusted veterans achieved a low level of education. The table displays the weak correlation between psychosocial adjustment and educational attainment. The literature review also mentions that many Vietnam veterans have only achieved low levels of education. Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce explained that veterans often do not achieve high levels of education because they entered the war before completing high school. And upon discharge from the service, many of them were faced with family obligations. Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce also found that well adjusted veterans tend to pursue higher education more often

than veterans somewhat adjusted or not adjusted. However, the findings in this research differ. In this study, even the well-adjusted and somewhat adjusted veterans did not achieve high levels of education. These findings could reflect the values of the sample population. They may not have deemed post-war education a priority in their lives. For various reasons these men chose to maintain full-time employment as opposed to achieving higher education.

In reviewing the data on educational attainment, table 4 reveals that the majority of the veterans, 16 or 53.3 percent, had completed high school before entering the military service, seven or 23.3 percent attended high school and three or 10.0 percent completed grade school or less. These findings support research studies conducted by Card, Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce. These researchers reported that the average years of schooling were 12.5.[5] In this study only two or 6.7 percent attended college, one or 3.3 percent attended graduate school and only one or 3.3 percent completed graduate school. These veterans seemed to have achieved low levels of education due to the fact that their education was disrupted by going into the war. Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce pointed out that early educational attainment was a significant indicator of potential educational achievement; "the higher the pre-military educational attainment, the greater the likelihood of resuming educational careers."[6] Whereas the veterans in this study had very little education prior to service, this seems to have reduced their likelihood of achieving a high level of education in their post-military years. Many men may have chosen not to return because they were so far behind their nonveteran peers, or they had family

responsibilities that made it difficult to do so. According to Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce, some veterans believed that it was not worthwhile to pursue their educational career because the rewards accompanying higher education were diminishing.[7] The data shows that presently an additional three persons or 10.0 percent have attended high school since they were discharged from the service, three more persons (10.0 percent of the population studied) have completed high school, five more veterans have attended college (16.7 percent) and one more person (3.3 percent) has completed graduate school. Here one can see a slight improvement in the attainment of higher levels of education for the veterans. These findings support the findings in the study by Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce. They found that the veterans were pursuing post-military educational careers, but to a lesser degree than nonveterans. Moreover, researchers, e.g., Rothbart, Sloan and Joyce, questioned why Vietnam veterans were not utilizing their benefits to obtain higher levels of education, but could only surmise that the veterans lacked the motivation to pursue their educational careers.[8]

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Vietnam veteran is a unique being who was confronted with deceit, death and destruction at an age when most youths are just beginning to develop a self image. The adolescent veteran was robbed of his youth and thrust into adulthood, and the researcher questioned what is the psychosocial adjustment of male Vietnam veterans based on their family stability, employment stability and educational attainment in 1988, thirteen years after the termination of the war.

In the overview of the literature review as compared with current findings, one may note that there are many variations in studies concerning the psychosocial adjustment of Vietnam veterans based on family stability, employment stability and educational attainment. However, there seems to be a consensus that there is a significant relationship between psychosocial adjustment and family stability and psychosocial adjustment and educational attainment. It becomes clear that the family systems theory and the social support systems theory are vital concepts in discussing the Vietnam veteran's psychosocial adjustment. The current findings show these theories at work in the lives of the veterans. Those veterans who have some type of support system are more adjusted to civilian life than other veterans.

Also, those persons who are well-adjusted achieved high levels of education. However, the psychosocial adjustment of the veterans did not seem to impact their employment status. It appears that with the aid of federal employment programs, many veterans were able to find some type of labor.

Implications

The findings of this study may be used to enhance the knowledge of autonomous social work practitioners who work extensively with Vietnam veterans. In treating this population, social workers must advocate for the veteran. It must be remembered that all humans have worth and contribute something to society. Historically, it is known that the American public has not warmly accepted the Vietnam veteran. However, social workers must emphasize the veteran's strengths and aid the veteran in making the adjustment back into society.

In order for the social worker to successfully intervene on behalf of the veteran, he/she must come to terms with his/her feelings about the Vietnam War; the social worker may serve as an instrument in helping the public to reframe its negative attitude about the war into a new and positive attitude. Once the autonomous social worker has done this, it will be easier to build a trust relationship with the veteran. It is also important that the social worker view the veteran from his (the veteran's) perspective. Although the social worker may not have participated in the war, he/she must strive to understand the veteran from an ecological standpoint. In treating the veteran, these factors must be kept in mind along with the fundamental social

work themes: Humanistic Values, Afrocentric Perspective, Autonomous Social Work and Planned Change. This information will assist the social worker in providing better services to this population.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions in Part I and Part II by filling in the appropriate number next to your response. Where other information is needed, please print in the space provided.

PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Present Age: _____ (years)
   Date of Birth: _____ (month/day/year)
   Dates of service in Vietnam _____ (month[s])

2. Race or Ethnicity

   (1) Caucasian
   (2) Black
   (3) Mexican or Spanish American
   (4) Other

3. Which of the following categories indicates your present marital status?

   (1) Never married
   (2) First married
   (3) Re-married
   (4) Separated
   (5) Divorced
   (6) Widowed
   (7) Other (specify)

   If you answered any category 2 through 7, was it a legal marriage?

   (1) Yes
   (2) No

PART II: MILITARY BACKGROND

1. Branch of Service

   (1) Marines
   (2) Army
   (3) Air Force
   (4) Navy
   (5) Coast Guard

2. Did you experience heavy or light combat?

   (1) Heavy
   (2) Light

3. What did you think about the Vietnam War when you entered the service?

(1) I was a strong supporter.
(2) I supported it.
(3) I did not really have an opinion.
(4) I did not support it.
(5) I was strongly opposed to it.

PART III: FAMILY RELATIONS

This portion of the questionnaire is designed to measure the way you feel about your family as a whole. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

1 - Rarely or none of the time
2 - A little of the time
3 - Some of the time
4 - Good part of the time
5 - Most or all of the time

(1)	There is a lot of love in my family.	_____
(2)	I really enjoy my family.	_____
(3)	I can really depend on my family.	_____
(4)	I really do not care to be around my family.	_____
(5)	Members of my family argue too much.	_____
(6)	There is no sense of closeness in my family.	_____
(7)	My family is a real source of comfort.	_____
(8)	I feel like a stranger in my family.	_____
(9)	My family does not understand me.	_____
(10)	I feel proud of my family.	_____

Please answer the questions in Parts IV and V by filling in the appropriate number next to your response.

PART IV: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

1. Prior to service, what level of education did you achieve?

(1) Completed grade school or less
(2) Some high school
(3) Completed high school
(4) Some college
(5) Completed college
(6) Some trade school
(7) Completed trade school
(8) Some graduate school
(9) Completed graduate school

2. What is your present educational level?

(1) Completed grade school or less
(2) Some high school
(3) Completed high school
(4) Some college
(5) Completed college
(6) Some trade school
(7) Completed trade school
(8) Some graduate school
(9) Completed graduate school

PART V: EMPLOYMENT STATUS

1. What is your present employment status?

(1) Employed full-time
(2) Employed part-time
(3) Unemployed

1a. If employed, what type of work are you doing?

(1) Managerial
(2) Craftsman
(3) Professional
(4) Clerical
(5) Unskilled labor

1b. Have you been employed at this occupation for one year or more?

(1) Yes
(2) No

1c. If unemployed, what are the reasons?

(1) Believe no work is available in line of work
(2) Lack necessary schooling or training
(3) Family responsibilities
(4) Physical or mental disabilities
(5) Available jobs do not pay enough

2. Were you employed prior to service?

(1) Yes
(2) No

3. Have you ever held a job for more than one year?

(1) Yes
(2) No

PART VI: PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Please place an "x" in the space that represents your view.

1. During the past year, how much have you been bothered or troubled by the following? (Mark one for each item.)

	Much	Somewhat	Not At All
Feeling unhappy, sad or depressed	_____	_____	_____
Feeling hopeless about the future	_____	_____	_____
Feeling nervous or tense	_____	_____	_____
Worrying too much about things	_____	_____	_____

2. How much were you bothered by the following symptoms?

	Not at All 1	A Little 2	Quite a Bit 3	Extremely 4
Suddenly scared for no reason	_____	_____	_____	_____
Feeling low energy or slowed down	_____	_____	_____	_____
Blaming yourself for things	_____	_____	_____	_____
Feeling easily annoyed or irritated	_____	_____	_____	_____
Feeling that people are unfriendly and dislike you	_____	_____	_____	_____
Never feeling close to another	_____	_____	_____	_____
Thoughts of ending your life	_____	_____	_____	_____
Feeling no interest in things	_____	_____	_____	_____
Feeling inferior to others	_____	_____	_____	_____
Feeling lonely even when you are with people	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

*****VET CENTER FACT SHEET*****

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The problems associated with Vietnam era veterans are numerous. Unlike veterans of previous combat involvement, the Vietnam veteran fought an unpopular war which nearly divided his country. He returned home with no fanfare or victory parades and was ostracized for his role in the war. He also found many of his countrymen insensitive to his war experiences as he became socially alienated. Since the first Vietnam veteran emerged on the American scene some 15 years ago, little has been done to address the problems he encountered during and after his combat involvement. Consequently, the Vietnam veteran was "turned off" by traditional institutions which served vets of earlier wars and conflicts.

PRESENT SITUATION

The unattended problems of the Vietnam veteran have emerged in what is commonly referred to as "delayed stress factors" associated with his combat experiences. In order to deal with many of the psychological problems now being manifested with this group of veterans, the concept of the Vet Center was developed. The Vet Center in Atlanta is one of many sites located nation-wide to address the problems of Vietnam era veterans. The Vet Center is designed to provide the Vietnam veteran with an opportunity to receive professional services and referrals through non-traditional approaches.

Individual and group counseling and integral program components with special emphasis being placed on outreach into the veteran community.

GOALS

To identify Vietnam era veterans residing in the Atlanta area through outreach into his/her community and to link them with all available resources.

OBJECTIVES

1. To provide individual and group counseling to eligible Vietnam era veterans and their families.

2. To assist veterans in obtaining medical care via referrals to the Veterans Administration Medical Center and to other community medical facilities.

3. To provide vocational and occupational assessments, counseling and meaningful job development and placements.

4. To act as a liaison with potential employers with special emphasis on on-the-job training (OJT) and upward mobility.

5. To encourage veterans to take advantage of existing benefits via Veterans Administration Regional Office (VARO).

6. To identify and assist individuals with other than honorable discharges via referrals to established resources.

7. To make referrals as indicated to appropriate community resources with follow-up.

One of the program's main missions is to eliminate the "red tape" in certain established agencies which is a frequent complaint of many Vietnam veterans. The staff will act as advocates for the Vietnam veteran when problems obtaining services are identified and documented accordingly.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Any veteran who served on active duty during the Vietnam era, August 5, 1964 through May 7, 1975, may be furnished counseling within the limits of the Vet Center facilities.

LOCATION

The Vet Center is located in mid-town Atlanta at 922 West Peachtree Street, Atlanta, Georgia 30309 on the corner of 8th and West Peachtree Streets. Transportation to this area is readily available and frequent. Also housed in the Vet Center are representatives of the Georgia Veterans Leadership Program (seen by appointments only); and the Georgia Department of Labor (Wednesday only).

TEAM MEMBERS

Delaine T. Perkins, ACSW	Team Leader
Willie T. Chappell	Therapist
John R. Fredericks	Therapist
Charles A. Pattillo	Therapist
Betty D. Windham	Secretary

HOURS

8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. - Monday through Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. - Friday

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